

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ASUNCI 00456 01 OF 02 292212Z

43

ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 ARAE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 AID-05 IO-11 AF-06 EA-07 PC-01 /087 W

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P 292140Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY ASUNCION

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6622

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 ASUNCION 0456

FOR ASST SECRETARY ROGERS FROM AMBASSADOR LANDAU

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PA

SUBJ: CURRENT LATIN AMERICAN PERCEPTION OF THE US

REF: STATE 10605, ASUNCION 403

1. OUR ASSESSMENT OF THE GENERAL GOP PERCEPTION OF THE US IN THE CURRENT CONTEXT OF DOMESTIC AND FOREIGN POLICY PROBLEMS WAS REPORTED IN ASUNCION 403. THE FOLLOWING COMMENTS ARE IN REPLY TO THE SPECIFIC QUESTIONS PUT IN STATE 10605.

A. IN THE AFTERMATH OF VIETNAM, WATERGATE AND CONGRESSIONAL INVESTIGATIONS OF CIA ACTIVITIES, PARAGUAYAN CONFIDENCE IN OUR ABILITY TO LEAD IN THE FIGHT AGAINST WORLD COMMUNISM, THEIR MAJOR PREOCCUPATION, HAS BEEN UNDERMINED. THE REVELATIONS THEMSELVES OF WATERGATE AND CIA ACTIVITIES (INCLUDING THE FINANCING OF ANTI-ALLENDE FORCES IN CHILE) DO NOT UPSET THE PARAGUAYANS IN THE LEAST. INDEED, THESE MIGHT EVEN BE VIEWED SYMPATHETICALLY AS SIGNS OF SKILLFUL STATECRAFT AND/OR RIGHT THINKING ON INTERNATIONAL ISSUES PROVIDED THEY DID NOT RECEIVE SUCH DAMAGING PUBLICITY. WHAT CAUSE CONCERN IS THE FACT THAT SUCH MATTERS HAVE IN FACT BEEN PUBLICIZED, LEADING TO WHAT THEY SEE AS THE UNDERMINING EFFECT OF

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PAGE 02 ASUNCI 00456 01 OF 02 292212Z

SUCH PUBLICITY ON THE ABILITY OF THE USG TO MEET QTE

THE COMMUNIST THREAT. UNQTE THE PARAGUAYAN IS NOT VERY SPECIFIC IN HIS PERCEPTION OF US WEAKNESS OR VULNERABILITIES--HIS CONCERN IS LARGELY UNFOCUSED I.E., WITH WHAT HE SEES AS A GENERAL WEAKENING OF THE US AS ANTI-COMMUNIST BULWARK. SIMILARLY HIS VIEW OF US STRENGTHS IS NOT WELL ARTICULATED. OBVIOUSLY, OUR ECONOMIC AND MILITARY POWER, THE WORLDWIDE NETWORK OF ALLIANCES AND

OUR CONTINUING OPPOSITION TO THE SPREAD OF COMMUNISM ARE VIEWED AS IMPORTANT PLUS FACTORS.

B. AS NOTED ABOVE, THE OUTCOME IN VIETNAM HAS SHAKEN THE GOP'S (ESPECIALLY THE MILITARY LEADERSHIP'S) FAITH IN OUR WILLINGNESS AND CAPACITY TO LIVE UP TO SEVERITY

COMMITMENTS ABROAD. HOWEVER UNREASONABLY, THEY SEEM TO THINK WE SHOULD HAVE CONTINUED TO FIGHT ON IN VIETNAM INDEFINITELY AND

ARE UNABLE TO UNDERSTAND THE RATIONALE FOR OUR WITHDRAWAL. THE PARAGUAYAN MILITARY OPENLY ENVIED OUR DIRECT INVOLVEMENT IN A HOT WAR AND SEEM TO REGRET THE WAR'S DEMISE. THEY DEFINITELY BELONG TO THE QTE LET'S MAKE THEM UNQTE SCHOOL OF THOUGHT.

C. DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE ADMINISTRATION AND CONGRESS ARE VIEWED SERIOUSLY AS AFFECTING OUR ABILITY TO FOLLOW THROUGH ON COMMITMENTS. HOWEVER I DO NOT BELIEVE THIS WOULD HAVE MUCH EFFECT ON PARAGUAY'S READINESS TO COOPERATE WITH AND DEPEND ON THE US BECAUSE THIS COUNTRY'S ANTI-COMMUNIST FOREIGN RMOLICY ORIENTATION LEAVES IT NO OTHER ALTERNATIVE ON GLOBAL ISSUES.

D. THE PARAGUAYAN GOVERNMENT DOES NOT AND, GIVEN THE LIMITATIONS OF ITS LEADERSHIP (IN TRAINING AND EXPERIENCE) PROBABLY CANNOT UNDERSTAND AT ALL WHAT THE US POLITICAL PROCESS IS ALL ABOUT, PARTICULARLY THE ROLE OF CONGRESS AND PUBLIC OPINION VIS-A-VIS THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH IN THE FORMULATION AND EXECUTION OF FOREIGN POLICY. THE VERY LACK OF A MONOLITHIC GOVERNMENTAL STRUCTURE IS VIEWED AS WEAKNESS. REGARDING MEASURES AFFECTING LATIN AMERICA, SUCH AS THE CANAL

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PAGE 03 ASUNCI 00456 01 OF 02 292212Z

NEGOTIATIONS AND THE TRADE BILL, PARAGUAY IS QUITE RELAXED AND, SATISFIED WITH THE STATUS QUO ON BOTH ISSUES, DOES NOT FAULT THE EXECUTIVE.

E. I DO NOT PERCEIVE ANY MAJOR CHANGES IN THE

TRADITIONAL ATTITUDE TOWARD THE US EXCEPT THE

LESSENING OF CONFIDENCE IN US AS THE CHAMPION OF THE ANTI-COMMUNIST CAUSE AS NOTED ABOVE. I DO NOT ANTICIPATE THAT THIS WILL HAVE ANY GREAT IMPACT ON PARAGUAYAN

FOREIGN POLICY WHICH IS PRETTY SET IN CONCRETE FOR THE DURATION OF STROESSNER'S RULE, BUT THE CHANGED PERCEPTION HAS RESULTED IN AN EROSION OF US INFLUENCE. BRAZIL HAS BECOME MORE INFLUENTIAL BUT WE HAVE NOT AS YET NOTICED ANY ATTEMPT ON THEIR PART TO INFLUENCE PARAGAYAN FOREIGN POLICY.

F. CUBAN INVOLVEMENT IN ANGOLA REALLY HAS NO IMPACT ON THE PARAGUAYAN ATTITUDE SINCE IT ONLY CONFIRMS THEIR LONG-STANDING JUDGMENT OF THE INIQUITY OF THE CASTRO REGIME (SEE ASUNCION 0313). AS FAR AS I CAN DETERMINE, OUR REACTION AS FAR AS IT GOES IS VIEWED WITH APPROVAL ALTHOUGH OUR NON-INTERVENTION IN ANGOLA MILITARILY IS TAKEN AS ANOTHER SIGN OF US DECADENCES.

G. THE PARAGUAYANS DO NOT SEEM TO ATTACH ANY VALUE TO DEALING WITH THE US ON A COLLECTIVE BASIS. SINCE THEIR FOREIGN POLICIES ARE SO OFTEN IN HARMONY WITH OUR OWN, THEY CLEARLY WOULD PREFER COOPERATION TO CONFRONTATION, AND SEEM MORE AT HOME IN A BILATERAL CONTEXT THAN IN CONCERT WITH ANY OF THEIR LA COLLEAGUES WHOM

THEY REGARD WITH SUSPICION. PARTLY FOR THIS REASON, PARAGUAY HAS BEEN COOL TO THE CONCEPT OF SELA AND HAS ONLY VERY RELUCTANTLY ASSOCIATED WITH IT. THE GOP BELIEVES IN MAINTAINING THE OAS AS AN OUTLET FOR SMALL

COUNTRIES.

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PAGE 01 ASUNCI 00456 02 OF 02 301450Z

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FM AMEMBASSY ASUNCION

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6623

S E C R E T SECTION 2 OF 2 ASUNCION 0456

H. SEE SECTION 3 ABOVE. HOWEVER, AS NOTED IN ASUNCION 0403, THE ANTI-COMMUNIST ISSUES ON WHICH WE CAN COUNT FOR AUTOMATIC SUPPORT ARE DIMINISHING. ON OTHER ISSUES THERE ARE SIGNS THAT PARAGUAY MAY BE LESS WILLING TO FOLLOW OUR LEAD.

I. NOT YET. HOWEVER THE GROWTH OF AN INCREASINGLY MORE INTIMATE RELATIONSHIP WITH BRAZIL COULD AT SOME FUTURE DATE BE TRANSLATED INTO POLITICAL INFLUENCE. DEPENDING ON THE BRAZILIAN ORIENTATION, THIS MIGHT LEAD PARAGUAY TO ADOPT POSITIONS ON INTERNATIONAL QUESTIONS AT GREATER VARIANCE WITH OUR OWN. IN THE ECONOMIC SPHERE, IT IS DIFFICULT TO SEE HOW GREATER BRAZILIAN INFLUENCE COULD HAVE MUCH BEARING ON US INTERESTS SINCE THE PARAGUAYAN MARKET FOR US GOODS IN ANY CASE IS SMALL AND PARAGUAY SUPPLIES US WITH NO RAW MATERIALS OF ANY CONSEQUENCE.

J. A DEEPLY INGRAINED DISTASTE FOR THE POLITICAL ORIENTATION OF THE THIRD WORLD MOVEMENT LEAVES PARAGUAY ALLOF FROM THE REST OF THE UNDERDEVELOPED WORLD. PARAGUAY IS A FIRM BELIEVER IN RECEIVING US BILATERAL ASSISTANCE, PREFERABLY MILITARY. IT RESENTS US AID TO BOLIVIA AND IS TOTALLY DISINTERESTED IN WHAT WE ARE DOING FOR THE REST OF THE UNDERDEVELOPED WORLD.

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PAGE 02 ASUNCI 00456 02 OF 02 301450Z

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